

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for providing multiple access modes in a data communications network, comprising:
 - (a) sensing a user device coupled to a port of a network access device;
 - (b) determining if said user device supports a user authentication protocol; and
 - (c) placing said port into a semi-authorized access state if it is determined that said user device does not support said user authentication protocol;wherein said semi-authorized access state limits access by said user device to a pre-configured network accessible via the data communications network.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein said pre-configured network comprises a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) network.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein said pre-configured network comprises the Internet.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein said pre-configured network comprises a low security virtual local area network.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein step (c) comprises selectively placing said port into one of a plurality of semi-authorized access states.
6. The method of claim 5, wherein step (c) comprises:
 - (1) determining a type of said user device; and
 - (2) selectively placing said port into one of a plurality of semi-authorized access states based on said type of said user device.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein step (2) comprises selectively placing said port into a semi-authorized access state that limits access by said user device to a pre-configured network comprising a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) network.

8. The method of claim 6, wherein step (2) comprises selectively placing said port into a semi-authorized access state that limits access by said user device to a pre-configured network comprising the Internet if said user device is a portable computing device.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein said user authentication protocol is IEEE 802.1x.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein said network access device comprises a network switch.

11. A network access device for providing multiple access modes, comprising:

a plurality of input ports;

a plurality of output ports;

a switching fabric for routing data received on said plurality of input ports to at least one of said plurality of output ports; and

control logic adapted to determine whether a user device coupled to one of said plurality of input ports supports a user authentication protocol used by a host network, and to place said one of said input ports in a semi-authorized access state if said authentication protocol is not supported;

wherein said semi-authorized access state limits access by said user device to a pre-configured network accessible via said host network.

12. The device of claim 11, wherein said pre-configured network comprises a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) network.

13. The device of claim 11, wherein said pre-configured network comprises the Internet.

14. The device of claim 11, wherein said pre-configured network comprises a low security virtual local area network.

15. The device of claim 11, wherein said control logic is adapted to selectively place said one of said input ports into one of a plurality of semi-authorized access states.

16. The device of claim 15, wherein said control logic is adapted to determine a type of said user device and to selectively place said one of said input ports into one of a plurality of semi-authorized access states based on said type of said user device.

17. The device of claim 16, wherein said control logic is adapted to selectively place said one of said input ports into a semi-authorized access state that limits access by said user device to a pre-configured network comprising a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) network.

18. The device of claim 16, wherein said control logic is adapted to selectively place said one of said input ports into a semi-authorized access state that limits access by said user device to a pre-configured network comprising the Internet if said user device is a portable computing device.

19. The device of claim 11, wherein said user authentication protocol is IEEE 802.1x.

20. A network system, comprising:
a host network that uses a user authentication protocol;
a network access device communicatively coupled to said host network; and
a user device coupled to a port of said network access device;
wherein said network access device is adapted to determine whether said user device supports said user authentication protocol and to place said port in a semi-authorized access state if said user authentication protocol is not supported; and
wherein said semi-authorized access state limits access by said user device to a pre-configured network accessible via said host network.
21. The network system of claim 20, wherein said pre-configured network comprises a Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) network.
22. The network system of claim 20, wherein said pre-configured network comprises the Internet.
23. The network system of claim 20, wherein said pre-configured network comprises a low security virtual local area network.
24. The network system of claim 20, wherein said network access device is adapted to selectively place said port into one of a plurality of semi-authorized access states.
25. The network system of claim 24, where said network access device is adapted to determine a type of said user device and to selectively place said port into one of a plurality of semi-authorized access states based on said type of said user device.

26. The network system of claim 25, wherein said network access device is adapted to selectively place said port into a semi-authorized access state that limits access by said user device to a pre-configured network comprising a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) network.

27. The network system of claim 25, wherein said network access device is adapted to selectively place said port into a semi-authorized access state that limits access by said user device to a pre-configured network comprising the Internet if said user device is a portable computing device.

28. The network system of claim 20, wherein said user authentication protocol is IEEE 802.1x.

29. The network system of claim 20, wherein said network access device is a network switch.